

***SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD***

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

April 19, 2004

Mr. David Coburn  
Steptoe & Johnson, LLP  
1330 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-1795

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34284, Southwest Gulf Railroad Company –  
Construction and Operation Exemption – Medina County, TX

Dear Mr. Coburn:

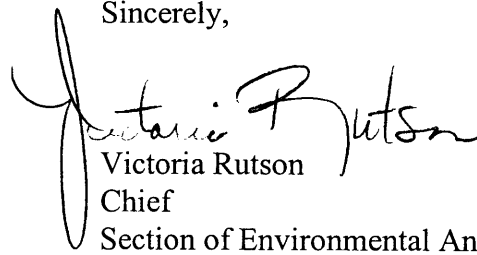
As you know, the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is currently conducting an environmental review of Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's (SGR) proposed rail construction and operation. SEA issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and draft scope of study for public review and comment on January 28, 2004. SEA is currently reviewing the comment letters received and is preparing a final scope of study for the EIS. We are writing to request SGR to provide information regarding some issues that have been raised in these comment letters.

SEA has received comments on the draft scope that question the feasibility of using truck transportation as an alternative to the proposed rail line. According to SGR, if the proposed rail line were not built, Vulcan Construction Materials, LP (VCM) would use trucks to transport the limestone from the proposed quarry to the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) rail line. Based on information previously provided by SGR, each truck would transport 20 to 23 tons of limestone aggregate per trip, which would necessitate approximately 850 round trips per day for loaded and unloaded trucks. In order to gain a more thorough understanding of the truck transportation alternative, SEA is requesting SGR to provide the following information:

1. Please provide a detailed description of the use of truck transportation at other Vulcan Materials Company quarries, including how much limestone aggregate is transported by truck from each quarry per year, the number of round truck trips per day and per year, the types of trucks used (hauling capacity), and the types of roadways used (paved or unpaved and roadway width).
2. Please provide an estimate of how much limestone aggregate would be transported by truck from VCM's quarry to local markets, including the number of round truck trips per day and the approximate distances these trucks would travel.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Rini Ghosh of my staff at (202) 565-1539.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis